

Calls on Speaker Boehner to Allow a Simple Up or Down Vote

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and over 180 of his U.S. House Democratic colleagues have cosponsored a bill that would prevent a payroll tax increase from going into effect on January 1, but Speaker John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor are refusing to allow an up or down vote on it. The legislation is identical to the U.S. Senate bill which passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. It would extend tax relief for 160 million Americans and ensure that unemployment benefits don't run out for 2.2 million Americans.

"If Speaker Boehner doesn't allow a vote on this bill, taxes will increase for 160 million Americans. It's that simple," said Hinchey. "The House Democratic Caucus, 89 U.S. Senators and President Obama have all lined up behind this bill and it would pass if we had a vote. While republicans claim they support a yearlong extension, they fail to mention that they only support it if it includes a wide array of controversial provisions that would hurt our environment, and middle class and unemployed workers. The only way to ensure that taxes won't go up on January 1 is to allow a vote on the bill I have cosponsored."

House Republicans endorsed a yearlong tax cut, which includes irrelevant and controversial provisions that would gut certain environmental regulations and place controversial restrictions on unemployment benefits. The bill would also continue a pay freeze for middle class federal employees, including truck drivers, janitors, nurses, police, firefighters, secretaries and teachers. The legislation was a political nonstarter in the U.S. Senate, and has no chance of becoming law.

In addition to the two-month payroll tax extension, Hinchey has also backed a separate year long payroll tax cut that would extend and increase the current payroll tax cut, saving the average family over \$1,500 on their tax bill in 2012. The tax cut would be fully paid for and protect the Social Security trust fund through a 3.25 percent tax on annual income over \$1 million. The bill also cuts payroll taxes in half for 98 percent of U.S. businesses.